

of California in bringing down the high level of safety noncompliance that has been found in Mexican trucks seeking to cross the border.

We believe that his would improve upon the provisions already in place in the bill as reported by the committee.

I know that Senators MCCAIN and GRAMM have an interest in these provisions. In deference to them, I will not seek adoption of the amendment at this time. I will leave it as the pending amendment to the bill.

If need be, we can temporarily lay the amendment aside and take up amendments on other matters as debate occurs on this bill.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama suggests the absence of a quorum. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CONRAD. Reserving the right to object, I ask that after Senator DODD completes his remarks, that it be possible for me to address the Senate for a period not to exceed 30 minutes. I make the request to respond to an attack that was made on me by Mr. Lindsey, the President's chief economic adviser.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator from Washington so amend her request?

Mrs. MURRAY. I amend my request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Connecticut.

VIEQUES

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to spend a couple minutes talking about an issue that has received some notoriety in recent months and some specific attention over the last few weeks. That is the issue of the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico and the incarceration of a number of people who went down to express their opposition to the continued use of Vieques as a bombing site.

First of all, I say to those who have demonstrated there and have been sentenced to 30 days—in one case, I think 60 days—I think all of these people involved certainly were aware that when you engage in civil disobedience, there will be a price to be paid for that civil disobedience. I will address the underlying issue of Vieques, but my hope is

that the authorities will recognize that there is some sense of balance in all of this and that 30 days and 60 days may be a bit excessive, to put it mildly, in light of some of the sentences we see meted out on crimes that are far more serious in our society.

I take particular note of my friend Bobby Kennedy from the State of New York and his wife Mary who are wonderful parents. During this period of incarceration, a new son was born to them. Bobby Kennedy, obviously, could not be there for the birth of his son because of his incarceration in Puerto Rico. I know how difficult and painful this was for him and his family. I want them to know that they have my strong sympathies and expressions of support. My hope would have been that Bobby Kennedy might have been able to be with his family during that important moment, despite the fact that he would be the first one to tell us that he understood fully the implications to the action he would take to express what were not only his views but the views of thousands of others within Puerto Rico and beyond the island over the issue of whether or not Vieques ought to be used as a continued site for targeting practice by the U.S. military.

I express my sympathies for Bobby Kennedy, Dennis Rivera, and others who are in prison at this moment for those actions.

There has been a long history here of divergence of interest with respect to the people of Puerto Rico and the Navy's interest in maintaining the capability for important live training exercises on the island of Vieques. Over the years, efforts have been made to reconcile these different interests. During the Clinton administration, in fact, an agreement was reached with the then-Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro Rossello, that called for the holding of a referendum in November of the year 2001 to allow the residents of Puerto Rico to choose whether to end the military's use of Vieques by 2003 or to indefinitely permit military exercises to continue after that date.

That seemed at the moment to reduce the tensions over this matter and to provide a way for the people of Puerto Rico to express their views. On the idea of a referendum, I was thinking to myself, living in Connecticut, along Long Island Sound where there are small islands off the coast of Connecticut, that if one of our islands were being used as a target by the military, how long we would allow it to persist if the people of my State felt strongly about it. I see the Presiding Officer from the State of Florida with a huge coastline. In many cases, of course, people have tolerated and supported it in their jurisdictions or States.

This is a matter which has provoked tremendous interest on the island of Puerto Rico, a part of the United States, of course.

Since the inauguration of Sila Maria Calderon, the new Governor of Puerto Rico, in January of this year, the ef-

forts by President Clinton and Pedro Rossello, it has become clear that the resolution calling for the referendum in November of 2001 has been sort of put aside, that the plan did not resolve these tensions, despite the good efforts of those involved in crafting that particular solution.

On June 14, in response to continued tensions, President Bush, in consultation with the U.S. Navy, announced that all military exercises in Vieques would cease by May 1, 2003.

That provoked serious voices of dissent within this Chamber. In fact, there were those who were very disappointed by President Bush's decision. I happen to think he made the right decision. I know it was not an easy one to make, but he did listen to the various sides of this story and decided that, given all the information and facts, this was the right decision to make. Naval training on the island was to proceed between then and May of 2003.

In addition, in accordance with the earlier agreement, the Navy returned more than a third of its Vieques holdings to the island on May 1, 2001.

Notwithstanding the Bush announcement, a number of issues have led to increasingly vocal opposition to the continued use of Vieques by the Navy in the interim period. Puerto Rican critics of the Navy cite the loss of economic development opportunities on the island because access to most of the island's land is restricted. They also mention the failure of the Navy to live up to pledges to compensate for these lost economic opportunities.

Damage to the environment and ecology have also been mentioned. Most worrisome, concerns have been raised about the impact the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility has had on the health and safety of the people on the island of Vieques. Were we to put ourselves in the shoes of the mothers and fathers of the children on the island of Vieques, we might better understand to some degree why there is increasing impatience and concern about having to wait 3 years before a potential danger to their loved ones will cease.

The relationship between the Navy and the people of Vieques has been a rocky one, to put it mildly, over the years. More recently the situation has grown from bad to worse. Visits by prominent Members of Congress and other well-known public figures, including the wife of Jesse Jackson and Robert Kennedy Jr., have served to educate Americans writ large about the Vieques issue.

Overly harsh treatment of these protesters by the court has only served to make, in my view, the matter even worse. It seems to me that the time has passed for the relationship between the Navy and the people of Vieques to ever be mended in a satisfactory manner that would allow both to coexist on this little island.

The matter is going to get even more heated, in my view, as the July 29 referendum called for by the Governor of